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Saint MACARIUS the Great of EGYPT

Daniel

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COVER: St. Macarius' desert of Scetis in Northern Egypt, showing one of the surviving monasteries.

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OPEN TO ME THE DOOR
OF REPENTANCE,

O GIVER OF LIFE!

REPENTANCE is expressed in Greek by the word *metania*. In the literal sense, this means an alteration of one's mind, of one's thinking. In other words, repentance is a transformation of one's orientation, of one's way of thinking, a transformation of a man within himself. Repentance is a reexamination of one's views, an alteration of one's life.

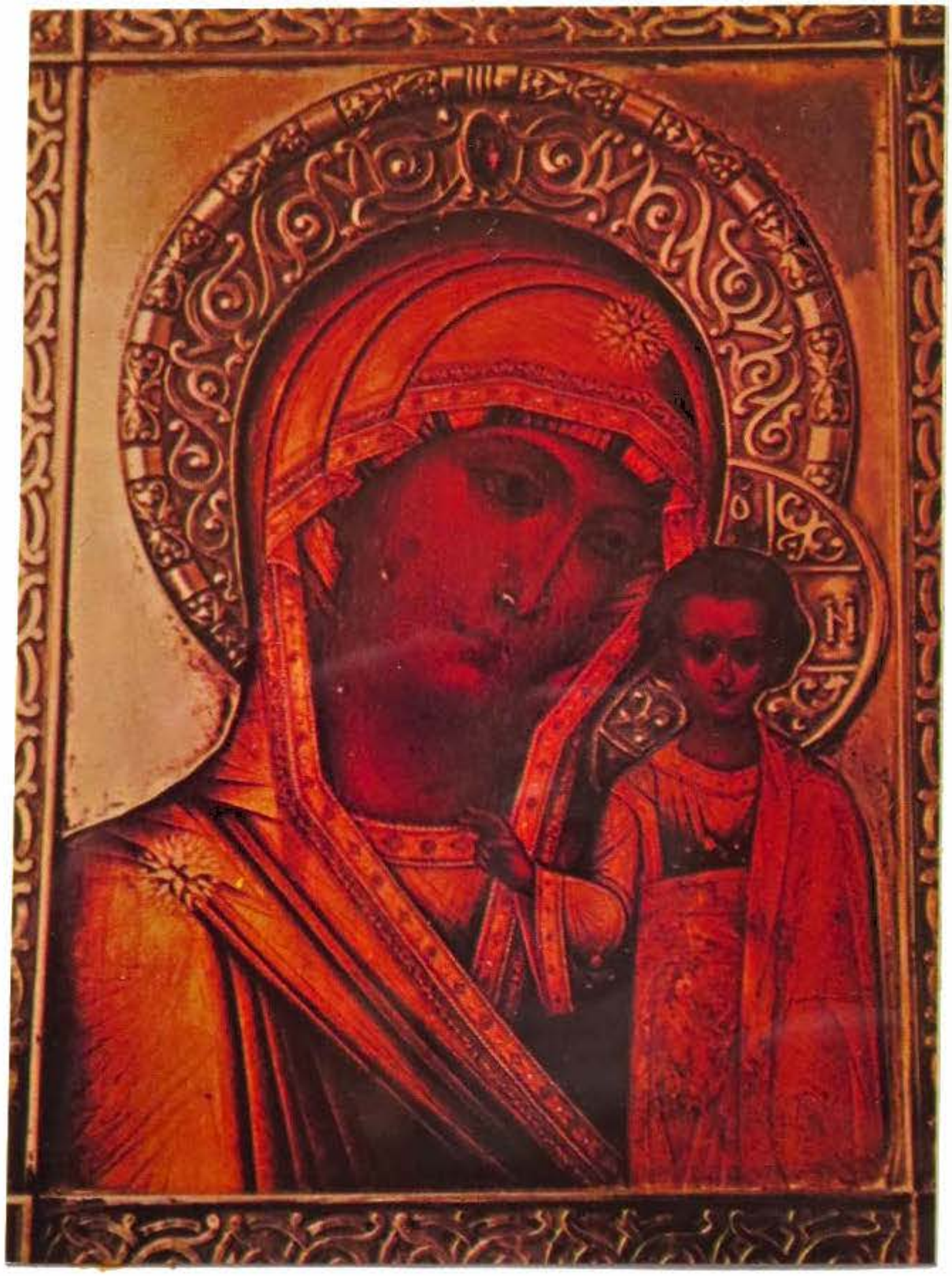
How can it come about? In the same way as when a dark room into which a man has happened to enter becomes illuminated by rays of sunlight. While he was looking at the room in the darkness, it presented itself to him in one aspect: much that was there he did not see, and he did not even imagine that it was there. Many things appeared to him not at all as they were in actual fact. He had to move cautiously, since he did not know where there might be obstacles. But now the room has become light: he sees everything clearly and moves freely.

The same thing occurs in the spiritual life also.

When we are immersed in sins and our mind is occupied only with worldly cares, we do not notice the state of our soul. We are indifferent as to how we are within, and go constantly by a false path, ourselves not noticing this. [*Continued on inside back cover.*]

+ Archbishop John Maximovitch

Archbishop John Maximovitch
San Francisco
February, 1963



The Weeping Kazan Icon of Athens

KONTAKION, TONE 8
TO THE KAZAN MOTHER OF GOD

LET US GATHER, O people, at this quiet and blessed refuge,* a quick help, a ready and fervent salvation, the Virgin's protection.* Let us hurry to prayer and hasten to repentance:* for the Most Holy Mother of God pours upon us inexhaustible mercies,* steps forward to our aid and delivers from great misfortunes and evils* Her good-willed and God-fearing slaves.

THE MIRACULOUS ICONS
OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

A NEW WEEPING ICON

THE KAZAN MOTHER OF GOD IN ATHENS

GOD'S CLOSENESS TO MEN is shown in the continuous revelation of His mercies to -- as well as His chastisements of -- the sinful human race. The record of this revelation shows certain mercies or chastisements so striking as to be an example to all His people -- as were certain great Orthodox victories, or the fall of Constantinople or of Imperial Russia. Thus too the sixties of the 20th century may well come to be noted as the epoch of the Weeping Icons of the Mother of God, a great sign to Orthodox Christians of these latter days.

An earlier article in *The Orthodox Word* (1965, no. 6) describes the beginning of this phenomenon in 1960, when three icons -- all paper reproductions -- owned by Greek families on Long Island, New York, began to weep. Thousands of Orthodox believers have seen these tears.

This great sign has recently been repeated in Athens. As if to show that the Mother of God is no respecter of persons, but visits rich as well as poor, and grants mercies through splendid as well as modest means -- the new Weeping Icon belongs to a wealthy family and is itself a valuable and rare object encased in silver and adorned with jewels. The following account was sent to *The Orthodox Word* by Archim. Timothy, priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Athens, which the owner attends.

THE OWNER of the Icon is a woman, Russian by birth, married to an Englishman of the Anglican confession, and they live in Athens. Both are devout. The husband, owner of a racecourse, was ill for three years [of cancer]. He was treated by the luminaries of medical science in Athens, London, and Switzerland. The sick man was fading with each year, and in the past year the family had already been warned by the physicians of the helplessness of science.

In the autumn of 1967 the Reeses flew to London--for the last time, as it seemed. The sick man was so weak that he could hardly be dragged into the plane. After his arrival in London there were again doctors,

consultations, but from these his condition did not improve. For the last time he went to his physician. On the way back to his hotel, while passing by an auction house, he saw in the window an Icon of the Mother of God which attracted his attention; he conceived a strong desire to buy it. He offered any price against that for which it had already been auctioned. An agreement was made and Mr. Reese returned to his wife with the marvelous Icon, which produced upon her also a strong impression.

Before very long the sick man began to feel better with every day; his strength increased and he began to feel that everything was not finished, even though the doctors had given him only weeks to live. Soon medicines and visits to doctors were no longer necessary, and the dark disease of cancer was conquered.

The Reeses were not yet aware of what had happened. Only after their farewell visits to the physicians did they realize Who was their real healer and physician. The doctors were astounded at the sight of their patient restored to health. They affirmed that they could not have been mistaken in their diagnoses; that this had happened was a miracle!

After they had returned to Athens, at the beginning of November, 1967, Mme. Reese began to notice that in the corner where she kept many icons, including the one acquired in London, some kind of light would appear from time to time. One night she saw in a dream a woman in white, with a dove; another time it seemed to her that the woman had come again and advised her to attach her engagement ring to the Icon of the Kazan Mother of God, which she did.

On the 16th of December, in the evening, as she was going to bed, Mme. Reese, while praying, noticed that something had appeared on the Icon on the right side. Not believing her eyes, she asked her husband to come and look. Astounded, both saw a large tear on the right cheek.

After several days, when the tear of the Mother of God began to leave a trace which descended farther, they informed me and I, accompanied by C. I. Dometiev-Pavlov, served a moleben before the wonderworking Icon, being plainly convinced that the Mother of God was weeping. Later many reverend fathers came to pray and prostrate themselves before this holy Image. Many times the wonderworking Image was brought for veneration to the church of the former Embassy, where I am priest; each time, despite bad weather, a multitude of Russians and Greeks has come to pray, being in need of help from the Heavens above. With what faith and prayerful feeling have they fallen down before this Image, being in sorrow or need, or thanking our Lady for Her entreaty for us sinners -- thanking Her Who intercedes before Her Son for a world gone astray, for mercy!

* * *

Archimandrite Nektary of Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, New York, saw the Icon on his visit last year to Athens, and gave this description of it (*Orthodox Russia*, 1968, no. 7): "Today I saw this truly marvelous Icon of the Kazan Mother of God for myself. It is a rare Icon. It is not of paper, but a real icon painted on wood and adorned with a silver Faberge *riza* with several stones, of about medium size, in a frame under glass. The tear of the Mother of God, quite expressively flowing out from the right eye, from the side next to the nose, has run down to the end of the nose and stopped. There are a few drops on the cheek to the right of the nose, and a little on the brow."

THE PHENOMENON of weeping icons is by no means new. Descriptions have appeared in *The Orthodox Word* of eleven such icons in Russian Church history, going back to the 11th century (see 1965, no. 6; 1966, no. 2; 1967, no. 5-6). Following are four more from the Pskov region of northern Russia, as translated from *The Benefactions of the Mother of God to Christians through Her Holy Icons*, St. Petersburg, 1905, publ. Tuzov.

12. *The Hodigitria Icon in Pskov* (*p. 481*). In the city of Pskov, in the church of St. Sergius at Zaluzhya, is found the Icon of the Hodigitria or Smolensk Mother of God, which shed tears in 1650. This Icon is the main Icon of the Mother of God on the iconostasis, adorned with a precious *riza* with the inscription: "In the year 7158 (1650), on the 5th of the month of February and the 2nd and 18th of May, from this wonderworking Icon, from the right eye, tears flowed." From the detailed description of miracles which is exhibited on the left pillar of the church, it is clear that the Icon belonged to the cleric Afanassy, who lived in the Monastery of St. Sergius in Pskov, near this same church, under Hegoumen Anthony; that the first miracle -- a flowing of tears "thicker than water" -- occurred in his cell; and that then the Icon was transferred to the church, where twice, in May, the same miracle was repeated in the presence of the Bishop of Pskov, Makary, and the whole people.

13. *The Umileniye Icon in the Opochka Cathedral* (*p. 790*). In the Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Opochka, Pskov Diocese, there is a wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God of *Umileniye*, which several times shed tears over the misfortunes of the Russian land.

14. *The Mirozha Mother of God* (*p. 630*). In Pskov, at the mouth of the river Mirozha, is the Monastery of the Saviour, founded in 1156. In it is a wonderworking Icon of the Mirozha Mother of God of the Sign. The Most Holy Mother of God is represented on It standing in full stature. This Icon was glorified in the year 1567, on the 24th of

September, a miraculous shedding of tears and other miracles at the time of the plague which occurred in Pskov under Tsar Ivan IV. From that time, in honor of the Mirozha Icon, a special Church service was compiled, which was published in 1666. A feast day is celebrated every year, using this service, on September 24.

15. The Mother of God of the Sign, of Kameno (p. 612). The parish of Kameno, where a wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God of the Sign is located, is 30 miles from the town of Opochka in the province of Pskov. Concerning the marvelous sign which came from the Mother of God, the following written narrative has been preserved. "There was a great and most glorious miracle of the Mother of God, which was performed by the Most Pure and Her venerated and honorable Icon in the year 6934 (1426), in the month of September on the 16th day, in the region of the city of Pskov, beyond Old Kolozh, in a village near the lake called Kameno, a distance of 30 miles from the town of Opochka. In the house of a certain Christian was an Icon of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary. And suddenly there was a terrible and fearful sign from this Icon; from the image of the Most Pure Mother of God, from the right eye, blood flowed and dropped on the place where the Holy Icon was. And when It, being moved from that place, was carried to the city of Pskov, that all might pray before It and be delivered from the death-giving plague, on the way blood flowed onto a cloth from that wonderworking Icon. At that time there was a plague also in Great Novgorod and all its region and in all Russian villages. At that same place, at the lake called Kameno, on the bank, where such a great and most glorious miracle occurred, a wooden church was built in the name of our Lady the Ever-Virgin Mary and Her honorable and glorious Sign. And to the present time the right-believing flock that comes with faith to the house of the Mother of God is received in undiminishing numbers. After the church was built on the lake called Kameno, a feast was established of the Mother of God of the Sign for all years to come, in the month of September on the 16th day; thus to the present day the feast is celebrated without fail in Her church with all-night prayer."

The miraculous sign in the parish of Kameno occurred at the time of the invasion of the Russian land by Prince Vitovt of Lithuania, with great shedding of Christian blood. Great crowds of people would flock on this significant day to the parish of Kameno, and from the time of the miraculous sign many miracles were worked.

The information concerning these icons serves to corroborate the conclusions made concerning the Weeping Icons in an earlier issue of *The Orthodox Word*. By Her tears the Mother of God shows Her prayer and mercy for men; Her intercession for the sinful human race becomes, as it were, visible in Her tears. Again, by such a great and extraordinary miracle the Mother of God is glorified by God, and this glory is echoed by men who hasten to the Weeping Icons in fervent gratitude and prayer. Finally, the miracle is most often a sign of present or impending danger to believers, whether from plague, invasion, or other misfortune. Sometimes, when man's response to the miracle has been fervent and profound, the misfortune has been averted; but sometimes, too, disaster has indeed come upon whole towns or regions.

Today there seems to be no immediate or impending catastrophe affecting Orthodox believers in America, in Greece, or in New Zealand (where the Tikhvin Mother of God continues to weep[1]). Yet if one looks more closely at the signs of these times, does one not sense in this decade of the 1960's as it were a door opening upon some monstrous future? Communism has just celebrated the golden jubilee of its bloody reign in Russia, now having enslaved the greater part of the East; increasing lawlessness and disorders everywhere corrode the last vestiges of order and decency in the free world; and the false prophets of an ecumenical new age promise peace and security and a spectacular "union"... upon the ashes of the Church of Christ and the blood of her last witnesses. The world is all but ripe for the appearance of the lawless one, Antichrist.

No small catastrophe, indeed, threatens the world and Orthodox believers -- but rather the greatest catastrophe of human history, the pinnacle of satanic achievement -- which, to the eyes of those outside the small flock of Christ's true Church, will seem to be the peak of worldly glory.

If we are indeed on the eve of these fateful times, the tears of the Mother of God are comprehensible and call us to repentance, prayer, and determination to follow the narrow path of Christ's Church to the end; and doubtless other such signs of warning and encouragement await us. For however the enemies of God may seem to triumph, God does not leave His faithful flock, and in the end, by the power and grace of God, theirs is the victory.

Most Holy Mother of God, save us!

1. See *The Orthodox Word*, 1965, no. 6, p. 225; 1967, no. 2, p. 70. Further information about this Icon will be included in a future issue.

Icon by Photios Kontoglou

SAINT MACARIUS THE GREAT

Commemorated January 19th

TROPARION, TONE 1

A DESERT DWELLER and an angel in the flesh* and a wonder-worker didst thou reveal thyself, our Godbearing father Macarius:* by fasting, vigils, and prayer receiving heavenly gifts,* thou healest the infirmities and the souls of those who come with faith to thee.* Glory to Him Who gave thee strength,* glory to Him Who crowned thee,* glory to Him Who works healings to all through thee.*

The Life of

ST. MACARIUS THE GREAT

By Prof. I. M. KONTZEVICH

ST. MACARIUS the Great was born in the year 300 and died in 390. Thus his life was passed entirely in the 4th century, that exceptional and remarkable period in the history of the Church. At its very beginning the persecution of three centuries against Christians came to an end, and there was born the great Byzantine culture which gave to the whole world for all times the greatest spiritual treasures which Orthodoxy contains.

The Empire, in the person of the Caesar Equal to the Apostles, Constantine, received baptism; the Church came out of the catacombs, out of its enforced seclusion, and accepted under its sacred vaults the seeking ancient world. But the world brought here its anxieties, doubts, temptations. The world brought also great anguish, as well as great pride. The Church had to assuage this anguish, and humble this pride. In trouble and tribulation the ancient world was reborn and entered into the Church's life. Spiritual awakening embraced the whole of society.

In the epoch of persecutions every Christian had to be prepared at any moment for the exploit of confessing the Faith and suffering martyrdom. Such a condition could be the lot of only a few chosen ones. Now religion became accessible to the masses, and the former high spiritual level was inevitably lowered. It began to be difficult to live in a Christian way in the world. The new epoch required a new means for acquiring "heavenly crowns." In order to attain passionlessness, one had to traverse a long path of battling with the passions. The martyr's exploit was replaced by a voluntary martyrdom: self-renunciation and asceticism, life in the desert amidst labor and privations. There began a great exodus into the desert. The epoch of monasticism was born.

A marvelous and striking spectacle is to be seen in the astonishing spread of monasticism at its very beginning. Egypt, where paganism had its chief support, where superstition and idol-worship reached the highest degree, now assimilated such a throng of monks that there were no fewer dwellers in the desert than there were in the cities.

As a rapid, strong current, until now held back in its course, tears a barrier asunder and strives to inundate the whole land, as the onetime-worshiped Nile fertilized all around it, -- so now did monasticism spread throughout Egypt and give fertility, not of earthly, but of heavenly, fruits. It was an unearthly world in the midst of this world, astonishing men by the grandeur of its spirit and granting them to know what a marvelous power human nature displays, what authority and might it contains, when man is entirely penetrated by the power of Christ's grace.

"I saw in Egypt," testifies Rufinus,[1] "fathers who live on the earth but lead a heavenly life... new prophets, of whose worth there is the testimony of their gift of signs and miracles. None of them is anxious over food and clothing, for they know that *after all these things do the Gentiles seek* (St. Matt. 6:32). They seek justice and the Kingdom of God, and all this, according to the promise of the Saviour, will be added to them. Their faith is such that it can move mountains. Thus certain of them by their prayers stopped river torrents that were about to inundate neighboring villages, crossed over waters as on dry land, subdued wild beasts, and performed numberless miracles; so that there is no doubt that it is by their virtues that the world stands."

The friend and favorite of Christ, the Apostle John, commands: *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world... For all that is in the world* [*is*] *the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life* (I John 2:15,16). Monasticism strives to crush the lust of the flesh by the vow of chastity, the lust of the eyes by the vow of poverty, and the vainglory of life by the vow of obedience. Beholding the glory of the Jerusalem on high, the Apostle John saw also the special honor rendered to virginity: *And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having His name written on their foreheads.* He heard the song which they sang before the Throne; and none could learn that song save these 144 thousand, who had been ransomed out of the earth. These elders are virgins, those who knew not women; they follow the Lamb wherever He goes; they were pur-

1. Rufinus of Aquileia: an Italian monk-priest of the 4th century who spent six years among the Egyptian anchorites, describing their life in his *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*. He later founded a monastery in Jerusalem and lived there for twenty years before returning to the West, and was known also as a translator of Origen.

chased from among men, as the first fruits to God and the Lamb, and in their mouth was no lie; they are unblemished before the Throne of God (Apoc. 14:1-3).

"The heavens, speckled with a multitude of stars, are not as bright," says Chrysostom, "as the Egyptian desert, which displays everywhere the huts of monks... It is better than paradise, where we see in human form numberless choirs of angels, throngs of martyrs, assemblies of virgins; we see the whole tyranny of the devil overthrown, and the Kingdom of Christ shines."

The founder of monasticism was the great Anthony. His disciple and continuator of his work was the great Macarius.

ST. MACARIUS was born in the Egyptian village of Ptinapor, which was situated not far from the Nitrian desert. The melancholy and solemnity of the place, the eternally clear sky, the majestic pyramids with their severe lines, the ruins of gigantic temples and buildings -- all this earthly grandeur reduced to dust involuntarily called forth thoughts of the instability of everything earthly. In addition, these places were filled with remembrances of the great Old Testament events that had occurred here: all this disposed one to the contemplative life and to self-reflection.

The parents of Macarius, the Presbyter Abraham and Sarah, were of righteous life and, like the Old Testament forebears of the same name, lived to old age without having children. The birth of St. Macarius was foretold to his father by the Patriarch Abraham, who appeared to him in a dream, and then by an angel as well. Likewise in a dream an angel appeared to the Presbyter Abraham when he was sick, healed him and, predicting the birth of a son, said, "He will be a dwelling of the Holy Spirit and will bring many to God." The new-born son was given the name Macarius, which signifies "blessed."

This "chosen vessel" was distinguished by an extraordinarily sensitive conscience. The Saint himself related an incident from his childhood. His companions stole some figs from somebody's garden. In running away they dropped one. Macarius picked it up and ate it. For his whole life he grieved over his action and could not remember it without tears.

When Macarius grew up, he submitted to his parents' will and, against his own wishes, entered into marriage; however, feigning illness, he evaded married life. Soon his wife died, and in a short time his aged parents also departed to the Lord.

Macarius prayed fervently that the Lord would send him a wise instructor in the spiritual life. By Divine inspiration there came to church

an ascetic of fair appearance, with long hair and a beard, with a body weakened by ascetic labors. There Macarius met him. Spending the whole day in spiritual conversation in the cell of an anchorite, the exhausted Macarius fell asleep with the approach of night; the elder, however, stood at praver and had a prophetic vision: suddenly there appeared throngs of monks in white garments and with wings and began to walk around the sleeping Macarius, calling him to the service indicated to him by God. The elder advised Macarius not to postpone his intention to devote himself wholly to the monastic life. Macarius accepted the advice. Having given away all his possessions, he returned to the anchorite, who, accepting him with love, instructed him in the monastic life and in basket-weaving. He settled him in a separate cell not far from himself, where Macarius gave himself zealously ovet to ascetic deeds, advancing rapidly in the spiritual life.

Macarius acquired the love and respect of the residents of the nearby village, his native Ptinapor, and they persuaded the bishop who was visiting them to make Macarius a cleric of their church, despite the fact that he was still very young. This was against the wishes of Macarius. A few days after his ordination as a deacon he left and settled near another village.

Here there came upon him a difficult trial which he bore with extraordinary good-heartedness, which testified of the already high degree of his spirituality. In this village a girl, being pregnant, under the influence of the evil spirit slandered Macarius, saying that he was the cause of her sin. The enraged parents together with their fellow-villagers subjected him to beating and tortures. Leaving him scarcely alive, they obligated him to furnish support for the girl. Meekly and without murmuring, St. Macarius bore all this and began to work all the harder, saying to himself: "Now, Macarius, you have a wife and children, and therefore you have to work day and night to furnish their support."

When it came time for the girl to give birth, the just judgement of God overtook her: for several days she was in terrible torment and could not be delivered of her burden. Then she understood that this was a punishment for her slandering of an innocent man. She acknowledged everything and indicated the one who was really guilty. Hearing this, all were greatly frightened, fearing God's chastisement for wronging the righteous one, and, bothered by their conscience, they decided to go to Macarius in order to obtain forgiveness for themselves. A friend of Macarius with joy forewarned him of this. But Macarius, who had willingly accepted dishonor, did not desire to receive honors and glory. At night he secretly left for the desert of Nitria.

There he lived and labored in asceticism in a cave for some time, and then went to St. Anthony in the desert of Pharan. For a long time Macarius had thirsted to see the great anchorite; the glory of his ascetic deeds and holiness had then spread everywhere. Abba Anthony, trying the patience of St. Macarius, did not at once allow him into his cell. Then, opening the door, he greeted him, saying, "I have long desired to see you, Macarius!"-- and with love he accepted him, consoling and reassuring him.

Macarius remained a long time with Anthony as his disciple. When Macarius had completely matured for an independent anchoretic life, St. Anthony commanded him to depart to the desert of Scetis. At that time the Mount of Nitria and the desert of Cellia that lay immediately beyond it were already peopled with monks, whose dwelling there, with the blessing of Abba Anthony, had been begun by St. Amoun. The desert of Scetis lay some days' journey beyond the desert of Cellia. It was a wild, sandy desert, where only rarely were springs to be found, and then with scarcely potable water. To this place no road had been laid out, and one directed one's course by sun and stars. It was in this unpopulated and somber locality that St. Macarius settled, giving himself over to ascetic labors, unceasing prayer, and contemplation of God.

St. Macarius, like his Abba Anthony, began to be subjected here to demonic attacks. He had to fight day and night with the demons. Sometimes they fell upon him in fury in the form of various monsters; sometimes in the form of enraged soldiers with a wild roar and cry they fell upon him, as if wishing to kill him; and sometimes they strove to unsettle him by means of trickery. Thus once at night demons, taking the form of angels, surrounded him and woke him up and said: "Arise, Macarius, and sing with us and do not sleep!" But he, recognizing the demonic attack, answered them without rising from his bed: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for your father the devil and for you!" The demons continued to call him to prayer, but not succeeding in this they began to beat him. The Saint, however, called out to the Lord: "Help me, Christ my God, and deliver me from those who encompass me, for a pack of dogs has encompassed me and opened their mouths against me!" And the whole multitude of demons disappeared suddenly with a great roar.

When St. Macarius was gathering palm branches in the desert, a demon encountered him and said to him: "I suffer a great sorrow in being unable to conquer you. Everything that you do I do also: you fast, and I eat nothing at all; you keep vigil, and I never sleep. In one thing only do you surpass me -- in humility."

Soon after St. Macarius had settled in Scetis, disciples began to gather around him. The more terrible was the desert of Scetis, the more courage was required to settle in it. And it was only such that St. Macarius accepted. And all his disciples surpassed the other monks, as much by their zeal for ascetic labors as by the perfection of their life.

ST. MACARIUS was only 30 years old when he went off into the desert, and then he was already called "youth-elder" for his spiritual experience and wisdom. At about the age of 40 St. Macarius was ordained priest. At this time he posessed already the gift of prophecy and wonderworking. He was always distinguished by exceptional emaciation, whether he had been fasting or not. When asked the reason for this, the Saint replied: "As a poker used to turn burning logs and sticks in a stove is always being scorched by fire, so in a man who directs his mind always to the Lord and always keeps in mind the terrible torments of the fire of gehenna, this fear not only gnaws the body, but dries up the bones as well."

When the number of the brethren had significantly increased, St. Macarius erected four churches. Each church had its own priest. The monks lived in cells separately from each other. St. Macarius himself lived also separately far off in the desert and had with him only two disciples. From his cell the Saint dug a subterranean passageway a half-mile long, and at its end a small cave. When he wished to hide from his numerous visitors, he went off to the cave, and no one knew where he was.

St. Macarius continued to visit his teacher, Abba Anthony, often, and he was enabled to be present at his blessed repose. He received St. Anthony's staff. This gift he received as a precious holy object, and therewith the spirit of the great Anthony reposed upon him, as once the Prophet Elisha had accepted the spirit of the Prophet Elijah.

Socrates, the biographer of St. Macarius, speaks of how he performed numerous miracles and freed so many from evil spirits that to describe it all would require a whole book. Here are some of them.

A certain man was burning with passion for a married woman, but she had spurned him. Then he turned for help to a sorcerer. In order to make the husband put away his wife, the magician by means of demonic sorceries cast upon her such a spell that she began to appear to everyone like a horse. The husband surmised what was the matter and brought her to St. Macarius. Those around him took her for a horse and prevented him from entering the monastery. St. Macarius, however, said to them: "You yourselves are like animals if your eyes see the form of a beast; but she, created a woman, will remain one, and only seems an animal to your eyes which have been deceived by sorcerers." Having

blessed water, he poured it out upon the woman, and she instantly resumed her natural appearance. And he told the woman that her trial had been allowed because she had not communicated of the Divine Mysteries for five weeks.

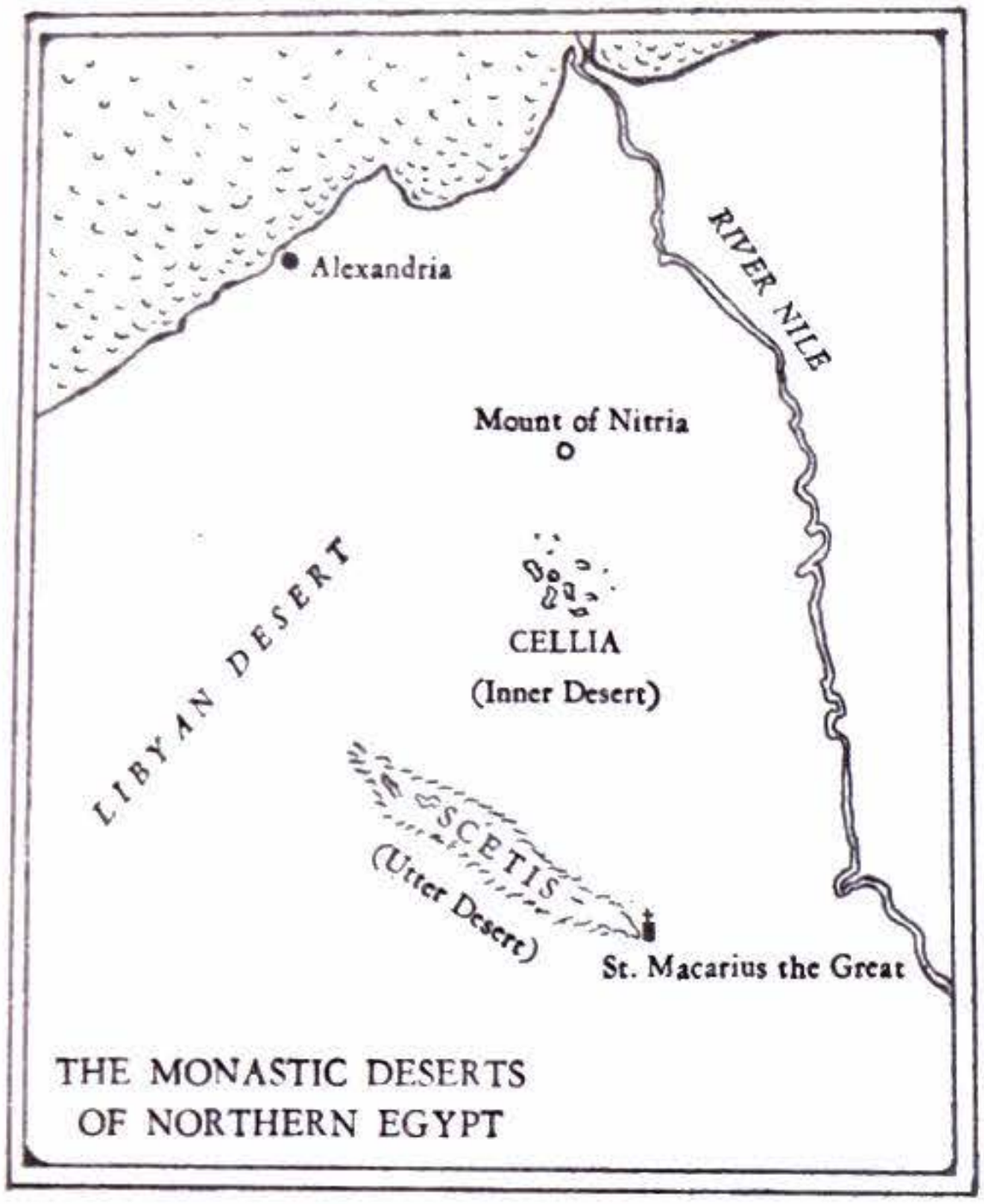
St. Macarius' gift of working miracles was so great that he could raise the dead. Once the heretic Hierax, who taught that there would be no resurrection of the dead, appeared in the desert and began to disturb the minds of the anchorites. He came also to Scetis and, in the presence of Macarius and numerous brethren, began to unfold his teaching, mocking the Saint's simplicity of speech. Seeing that the brethren were beginning to waver, Macarius proposed that all go to the cemetery; there, having prayed, he turned to the grave of a recently deceased monk and loudly called him by name. He answered from under the earth. The brethren hastened to dig him up and brought him alive out of the grave. Struck with terror, the heretic took flight and, pursued by the brethren, left their boundaries.

On two other occasions also St. Macarius raised a dead man: once (witnessed by Abba Sisoes) to exonerate an innocent man accused of murdering the dead man, and once (related by Rufinus) to save a woman about to be sold into slavery with her children.

A multitude of pilgrims and the sick flocked to St. Macarius. For them a guest-house was built in the monastery. The Saint had the custom of healing every day, anointing with oil, only one sick man, with the wise intention that the sick, remaining longer in the monastery, would receive spiritual benefit.

Once there came a priest with his head afflicted with gangrene, with open wounds on his neck. St. Macarius explained the reason for this: the priest had dared to serve Liturgy after committing the sin of adultery. The priest promised never again to serve, and St. Macarius healed him.

Of the Saint's extraordinary power of prayer and his clairvoyance the following incident will testify. His young disciple was selling baskets and mats in town. Here he was subjected to the peril of falling when a harlot, wounded by the beauty of the youth, by cunning, under the pretext of buying something, lured him to her. When she began to incline him to sin, the novice cried out to the Lord: "O Christ and King, Who delivered His servant from the belly of the whale, deliver me also from this sin!" And instantly he was carried off and found himself in his cell in the desert, where he saw St. Macarius, who with his spiritual eyes had seen his disciple in danger and had prayed for him to God.



THE MONASTIC DESERTS
OF NORTHERN EGYPT

ABBA Macarius constantly instilled the idea that the foundation of everything is humility: "If we see that anyone exalts himself and becomes haughty because he is a participant of grace, then even were he to perform signs and raise the dead, if he does not acknowledge his soul to be dishonored and debased, and himself poor in spirit and vile, he is robbed by malice and does not know it." This feeling of humility in the presence of an abundance of the gifts of grace is explained by St. Macarius in an excellent comparison: "If a king leaves his treasure with a poor man, the one who receives it does not consider this treasure as his own property, but everywhere acknowledges his poverty, not daring to spend another's treasure, because he always reasons with himself: this treasure is not only not mine, but what is more has been left me by a powerful king, and he, when he wishes, will take it from me. Thus should those who possess the grace of God think of themselves. If they exalt themselves and their hearts begin to grow haughty, the Lord will take from them His grace, and they will be left the same as they were before receiving it." "If anyone says, 'I have enough and more than enough,' he is deceived and a liar."

St. Macarius related how once he had had a revelation that he had not attained as yet such perfection in virtuous life as two women who lived in town. Then he left immediately on the long journey to town and sought them out, and at his request they related to him the following concerning themselves: "We married two brothers and lived together in one house for fifteen years. During this time we did not utter a single malicious or shameful word and lived together in peace and harmony. We wanted to leave our husbands and go to a convent, but, even though we begged with many tears, our husbands did not let us

[*Continued on page* 25]

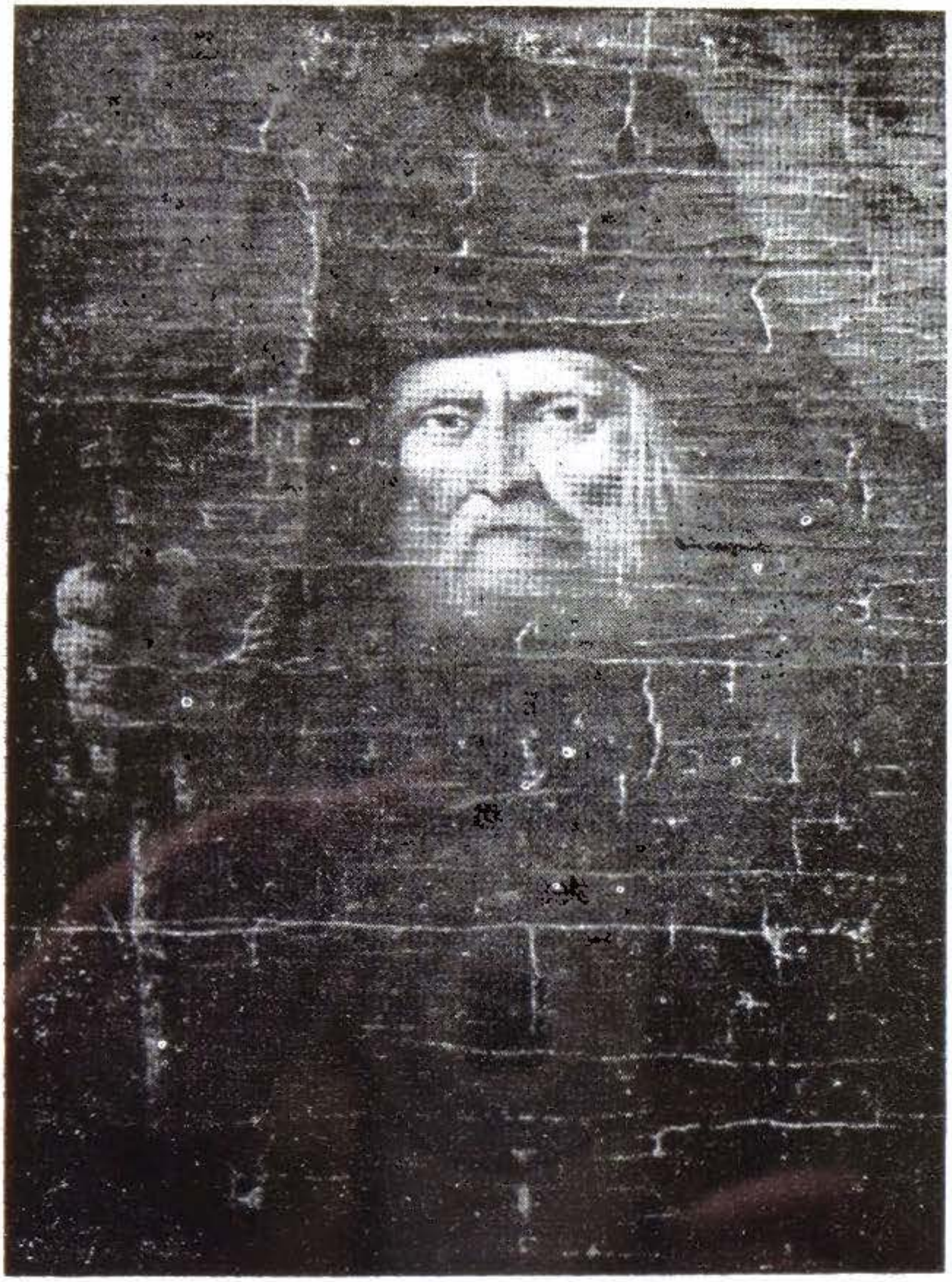
The Desert of Scetis, with two of the surviving monasteries

THE MONASTIC DESERTS OF NORTHERN EGYPT

At the very edge of the Libyan Desert, some forty miles southeast of Alexandria, lies the Mount of Nitria, *the first area to be settled by monks and the first to be abandoned because of its closeness to the world. Ten miles south is* Cellia, *"the Cells," the more remote "inner desert," now also long since abandoned. Forty miles farther south, through a wide and trackless wasteland, is* Scetis, *the "utter desert" in which St. Macarius was the first to settle. It has continued to support monastic life to the present day, although since the Council of Chalcedon (451) all the monasteries have belonged to the Coptic Monophysite church.*

The ancient Scetis (present day Wadi 'n Natrun) is a shallow valley with gradual, gravel-covered slopes and a floor (slightly below sea level) of drift sand with small knolls of limestone. The northeast slope has a number of natron lakes surrounded by high rushes and reeds: the "Marsh of Scetis." There are several fresh-water springs also. The four surviving monasteries (three of which trace their foundation to the fourth century) are all on the southwest side of the valley.

The monasteries were originally scattered cells (either caves or crude stone huts with reed roofs) of disciples in the vicinity of an elder's cell; later a nucleus developed around a church and well; finally the whole compound was walled for protection against attacks by nomads. (For a thorough history of these regions see: Hugh Evelyn White, The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrun, *N. Y., 1932.)*



ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV
1759 - 1833

Portrait (detail) painted in his lifetime, now treasured in Novo-Diveyevo Convent in Spring Valley, N.Y., as a miracleworking icon

TROPARION, TONE 4

FROM THY YOUTH hast thou loved Christ, O blessed one,* and Him Alone ardently longing to serve,* with unceasing prayer and toil hast thou labored in the wilds,* and having acquired by a feeling heart love for Christ,* thou hast been revealed as the beloved and elect of the Mother of God.* Wherefore we cry to thee:* Save us by thy prayers, Seraphim our holy father.*

THE SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

TO LAYMEN AND MONKS

Of Our Father Among the Saints
ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV

XXXII

RENUNCIATION OF THE WORLD

FEAR OF GOD IS ACQUIRED when a man, renouncing the world and everything that is in the world, concentrates all his thoughts and feelings on the single thought of God's law, and immerses himself entirely in contemplation of God and in a feeling of the blessedness promised to the saints.

One cannot renounce the world and come into a state of spiritual contemplation while remaining in the world. For as long as the passions are not quieted, one cannot acquire peace of soul. But the passions do not become quiet as long as we are surrounded by the objects which awaken the passions. In order to come into perfect passionlessness and attain perfect silence of the soul, one must labor much in spiritual reflection and prayer. But how is it possible fully and calmly to immerse oneself in contemplation of God, and be instructed in His law, and ascend with all one's soul to Him in flaming prayer, while remaining amidst the perpetual roar of passions warring in the world? The world lies in evil.

Without having freed itself from the world, the soul cannot love God sincerely. For worldly things, in the words of St. Antioch, are as it were a veil for the soul.

If, says the same teacher, we live in an alien city and our city is far from this city, and if we know our city: then why do we tarry in an alien city and prepare for ourselves a field and a dwelling in it? And how shall we sing a song to the Lord in an alien land? This world is the domain of another, *i.e.*, the prince of this world (Homily 15).

XXXIII

ASCETIC LABORS

ONE SHOULD NOT undertake ascetic labors beyond one's measure, but one should strive to make our friend--the flesh--faithful and capable of performing virtues.

One should go by a middle path: *turn not aside to the right hand nor to the left* (Prov. 4: 27); and one should render unto the spirit what is spiritual, and unto the body what is bodily; for the maintenance of temporal life, one should render what is necessary, and for life in society, that which is lawfully demanded by it, in accordance with the words of Holy Scripture: *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's* (St. Matt. 22: 21).

One must condescend to the soul in its infirmities and imperfections, and bear its defects as we bear those of others; one must not, however, become lazy, but should spur oneself to do better.

Perhaps one has eaten too much, or done something similar to this which is natural to human weakness -- do not be disturbed at this, and do not add injury to injury; but bestir yourself to correction, and at the same time strive to preserve peace of soul, according to the word of the Apostle: *Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth* (Rom. 14: 22).

The same thought is contained in the words of the Saviour: *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven* (St. Matt. 18: 3).

If the body has been worn out by ascetic labors or sickness, one should strengthen it with moderate sleep, food and drink, not observing even the times. Jesus Christ, after the raising of Jairus' daughter, immediately commanded: *Give her to eat* (St. Luke 8: 55).

Every success in anything we should refer to the Lord and with the Prophet say: *Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory* (Ps. 113: 9).

To the age of about 35, that is, to the midpoint of our earthly life, it is a great accomplishment for a man to preserve himself, and many in these years do not remain in virtue, but turn aside from the right path to their own desires; thus St. Basil testifies of this (Homily

on the beginning of Proverbs): Many have gathered much in their youth, but being in the midst of life they could not bear the tumult of temptations which rose up against them from the spirit of cunning, and they were deprived of all this.

And therefore, in order not to experience such a metamorphosis, one must put oneself as it were on the scale of a test and an attentive self-examination, according to the teaching of St. Isaac the Syrian: For as on a scale it is fitting that the destiny of each be weighed out (Homily 40, On Prayer).

XXXIV

REPENTANCE

HE WHO WOULD BE SAVED should ever have his heart disposed to repentance and broken, according to the Psalmist: *Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise* (Ps. 50:17).

In such brokenness of spirit a man can easily pass securely through the artful snares of the proud devil, whose whole care consists in agitating the human spirit, and in agitation sowing his tares, in accordance with the words of the Gospel: *Lord, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this* (St. Matt. 13:27-28).

When, however, a man strives within himself to have his heart humble and his thought not agitated, but peaceful, then all the snares of the enemy are without effect; for where there is peace in one's thoughts, there resides the Lord God Himself -- *His place is in peace* (Ps. 75:3).

The beginning of repentance proceeds from fear of God and heedfulness, as the holy martyr Boniface says (Lives of Saints, Dec. 19): The fear of God is the father of heedfulness, and heedfulness is the mother of inner peace, and the latter gives birth to conscience, which causes the soul to behold its own ugliness as in a certain pure and undisturbed water; and thus are born the beginnings and roots of repentance.

Throughout our whole life by our transgressions we offend in greater or less degree the majesty of God, and therefore we should also ever humble ourselves before Him, begging remission of our debts.

Question: Can a man who has received grace rise after falling?

Answer: He can, according to the Psalmist: *I was overturned that I might fall, but the Lord supported me* (Ps. 117:13); for when Nathan the prophet accused David in his sin, the latter repented and immediately received forgiveness (II Kings 12:13).

An example of the same thing may be found in the anchorite who, going for water, fell into sin with a woman at the spring, and returning to his cell, acknowledged his sin and began again to lead an ascetic life as before, not accepting the counsels of the enemy who represented to him the seriousness of the sin and would have led him away from the ascetic life. The Lord revealed this incident to a certain father, and commanded him to glorify the brother who had fallen into sin for such a victory over the devil.

XXXV

FASTING

TO LAY UPON ONESELF a strict rule of abstinence in everything, or to deprive oneself of everything that might serve to lighten one's weaknesses -- not everyone can accept this.

One should partake of enough food every day so that the body, strengthened, may be the friend and helper of the soul in the performance of virtue; otherwise it may happen that, while wearing out one's body, one's soul also will grow weak.

On Fridays and Wednesdays, and especially during the four fasts, partake of food once in the day, and an angel of the Lord will join himself to you.

XXXVI

VIGILANCE AGAINST TEMPTATIONS

ONE SHOULD, as far as it is proper and necessary, be sometimes a child, and sometimes a lion, this latter especially when passions or evil spirits rise up against us; because *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places* (Eph. 6:12).

Church of the Dormition in Saroe Monastery

We must always be attentive to the assaults of the devil; for can we hope that he will leave us without temptation, when he did not leave our Founder and Source of faith and Perfecter the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? The Lord Himself said to the Apostle Peter: *Simon, Simon, behold, satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat* (St. Luke 22: 31).

And thus we must ever call upon the Lord in humility and pray that He may not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength, but that He may deliver us from the evil one.

For when the Lord leaves a man to himself, the devil is ready to grind him, as a millstone grinds kernels of wheat.

ANTHONY THE GREAT
Greek 16th-century icon
by Michael Damaskinos

ASSEMBLY OF THE FATHERS OF ORTHODOX MONASTICISM

Headed by St. Anthony the Great of Egypt, founder of Orthodox Monasticism, the Holy Fathers depicted below represent major monastic flowerings in various lands and times; from right to left: St. John Cassian the Roman (4th c.), St. John of Ryla, Bulgaria (10th c.), St. Macarius, St. Onuphrios of Sinai (4th c.), St. Theodore the Studite of Constantinople (9th c.), St. Simeon of Serbia (12th c.), and St. Athanasius of Mount Athos, Greece (10th c.).

Fresco on the south wall in the Refectory at Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, New York; painted by Archimandrite Cyprian

[*Continued from page 16*]

go. Then we made a covenant with God and among ourselves -- not to utter a single worldly word to our very death." And the Saint said: "In truth God seeks neither virgin nor married woman, neither monk nor layman, but a free intent, accepting it as the deed itself, and He grants to the free will of every man the grace of the Holy Spirit, which operates in a man and directs the life of everyone who desires to be saved."

"I am not yet a monk, but I have seen monks," said Abba Macarius to the Nitrian brethren, and related how once by inspiration from above he went to the inner desert and, coming to an immense marsh, saw wild animals who had come to drink water. Among them were two naked men. They informed the Saint that they had dwelt here for thirty years already and lived on the food of dumb animals. They informed the Saint that they suffered neither from frost in winter nor from heat in summer. "What must I do to be a monk?" Macarius asked them. They said: "If you cannot renounce the world as we have, then go to your cell and weep over your sins."

The gift of love in St. Macarius attained the highest degree. His love for his neighbor was revealed especially in his condescension to the weaknesses of others. By the testimony of the elders of Scetis, he was as it were an "earthly god": just as God, they said, while seeing the whole world does not chastise sinners, so also Macarius covered up men's weaknesses, which as it were he saw without seeing, and heard without hearing.

"Christians," he said, "should judge no one, neither an open harlot, nor sinners, nor dissolute people, but should look upon all with simplicity of soul and a pure eye. Purity of heart, indeed, consists in seeing sinful and weak men and having compassion for them and being merciful."

With meekness and mildness Macarius directed his brethren, inspiring in them above all love for each other. He said: "If, in giving someone a reprimand, you come in irritation, then you are gratifying your passion. In this fashion, without saving others you cause harm to yourself as well."

Having received power over evil spirits, St. Macarius could see them with his spiritual eyes and enter into conversation with them. Once he saw a demon coming as if with gourd dishes hanging from him. Questioning him, the Saint discovered that he was going to a neighboring monastery to tempt the brethren. In the dishes various temptations

had been prepared as if some kind of victuals. Finding out from the demon that a certain monk by the name of Theopemptus was to be subjected to temptations, Abba Macarius hastened to that monastery. All the brethren came out with palm branches to meet the great and renowned Abba. Each one hoped that he would stop at his cell, but the Saint went to Theopemptus. The latter was extremely gladdened and consoled by this. In conversation with Macarius this brother was ashamed to confess his impure thoughts, and even denied that they tempted him. Macarius said: "How many years I have labored in asceticism, and I, an old man, am troubled by the spirit of fornication." And Theopemptus replied: "Believe me, Abba, I am likewise troubled." The elder spoke also of other thoughts, as if they tempted him, and in this fashion brought the monk to complete avowal. Then, having given him instruction on the battle with thoughts and on fasting, he left him. And from that time this brother labored in asceticism more than others.

With love and humility St. Macarius converted to Christ a certain pagan priest. A disciple of the Saint met him first and called him a demon. The indignant priest beat the monk almost to death. When, however, Macarius met him right after this and behaved kindly to him, this so affected him that he grasped Macarius' feet and said: "You are a man of God; I will not let you go until you make me a monk." Following the priest, many pagans too were converted to Christ. Recalling this incident, the elder said: "A bad word makes bad even the good, but a good word makes good even the bad."

One youth, desiring to become a monk, asked St. Macarius: "How may I be saved?" The latter sent him to the cemetery, at first to rebuke and then to praise the dead, and then asked him what they had replied. "They were silent both to praise and to reproach," replied the youth. "And so you too," said the elder, "if you wish to be saved, be dead like the dead: think neither of insults from men nor of human glory."

Let us cite several instructions of St. Macarius:

"If for you disgrace is like praise, poverty like wealth, insufficiency like abundance, then you will not die."

"If we shall remember the evil that men have done us, the remembrance of God will grow weak in us; but if we shall remember the evil brought upon us by demons, we shall be safe from their arrows."

Asked how to pray, he replied: "It is enough if you will often repeat from your whole heart: Lord, as it pleases Thee and as Thou knowest, have mercy on me. And if temptation comes upon you: Lord, help me! The Lord knows what is profitable for us and has mercy on us."

ST. MACARIUS THE GREAT

IF WE speak of Macarius the Great, we should make note also of his contemporary, *St. Macarius of Alexandria.* He was priest in a monastery in the desert of Cellia which adjoined Scetis and was a close friend in asceticism of Macarius the Great (known also as "of Egypt"). Like the latter he was a disciple of Anthony the Great and likewise was of lofty spiritual life. The two Macarii often met for conversation and prayer.

During the domination of the Arians in the reign of the Emperor Valens (364-378) there was a severe persecution of the Orthodox. After the death of Athanasius the Great his see in Alexandria was forcibly seized by an Arian, Lucius, who banished the canonical successor, Patriarch Peter. The Egyptian desert dwellers were zealous defenders of the Nicene Creed. Lucius attempted by cruelty and tortures to force them into Arianism, but he did not succeed in this. Then he began to send the holy desert dwellers into captivity. St. Macarius the Great and St. Macarius of Alexandria were among the first seized. Together with some of the brethren they were placed by soldiers in a ship at night and sent to an island where only pagans lived. But here also the Lord glorified His faithful slaves. The daughter of the local pagan priest was possessed by an evil spirit. Sensing the approach of the Saints, she ran out to meet them, calling in a loud voice: "Why have you come here? This island is our dwelling place from of old!" The Saints drove the demon out of her. Then the father of the healed girl, and after him all the dwellers on the island as well, were baptized. When news of this reached Alexandria, Lucius, because of the danger of a popular uprising, was forced to return the exiles to their desert.

An extraordinary and irresistible impression was produced by St. Macarius on all who came into contact with him. Divine grace transfigured his whole being. It could be noticed in his glance, in his speech, and in that extraordinary love which poured out upon all around him. His word, even the simplest, was always uttered with authority. It created and built. Filled with divine wisdom and power, it penetrated to the very depth of the human spirit. Even those who didn't know St. Macarius recognized him instantly amidst other monks by his extraordinary appearance.

Not long before the death of Macarius, the desert dwellers of the Mount of Nitria appealed to him with a request: "Father, so as not to trouble the whole multitude of the brethren with coming to you, do you yourself, before you depart to the Lord, come to us." When the Saint came to them, all with great joy came out to meet him. The elders begged him to give them all instructions, and St. Macarius said: "Let

us weep, brethren: let our eyes pour out tears before we depart for a place where our tears will burn our bodies." All burst out weeping, fell on their faces and begged: "Father, pray for us!"

St. Macarius possessed the grace-bestowed gift of tears. He often shed them and said: "You will become worthy of the vision of the wondrous and blessed images of the Jerusalem on high in no other way than by day and night shedding tears according to the example of him who said: *Every night I flood my bed, I water my couch with my tears* (Ps. 6:7). A tear shed from great sorrow and heartfelt distress is food for the soul, given from heavenly bread."

FOR SIXTY YEARS St. Macarius lived in his desert of Scetis, and at the age of 90 he departed to the Lord. Not long before his death, there appeared to him from the world above his Abba Anthony the Great, chief of the desert dwellers, and Pachomius the Great, founder of the coenobitic monasteries in Egypt. They said, "Rejoice, Macarius; the Lord Jesus Christ sent us to announce to you your joyful death. On the ninth day after today you will depart into eternal life. On that day we shall come again to you and with joy shall take you with us, so that together with us you might appear before the Lord's Throne and enjoy immortal life." St. Macarius summoned the brethren. He instructed them to preserve strictly the rules of the fathers and the traditions of the monks, placed the more experienced and advanced brethren as teachers among them, blessed all, bade farewell to them, and in solitude began to prepare for his departure.

On the day of his death a Cherubim appeared to him with a multitude of angels and said: "Arise, O follower of the Lord, and come with us into eternal life." The Cherubim indicated to him the throngs of saints who had come out to meet him: "Behold the assembly of apostles, behold the throng of prophets, behold the multitude of martyrs, behold the choir of holy hierarchs, fasters, monks and righteous men. Give unto me now your soul, which I was commanded by God to preserve during its earthly life." With the words, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," St. Macarius departed to the Lord.

The compiler of his life, Bishop Sarapion of Thmuis, relates how he heard from St. Paphnutius, the disciple of St. Macarius, that certain of the fathers saw with their mental eyes the ascension of the Saint's soul, as they saw also standing in the distance legions of demons who cried out: "You have escaped our hands, Macarius, you have escaped!" Only after having reached the gates of paradise did Macarius answer: "Yes, guarded by the power of my Christ, I have escaped your snares!"

SAINT MACARIUS THE GREAT

ANTHONY THE GREAT, in his God-inspired insights, gave a direction to monasticism for all times, both by his instructions and rules for beginners and for those in various stages of spiritual development, and by his guidance for the accomplished. It remained for following generations only to discover and develop the possibilities which the great Anthony gave them.

Macarius the Great, the disciple and closest friend of St. Anthony, having attained the measure of his Abba, not only assimilated his teaching, but in his writings transmits also his own contemplations and insights. His *Homilies* are founded on personal experience, and therefore their language is clear, expressive, and possessed of an extraordinary imagery and power. His teaching is the writings of a dweller of heaven, a heavenly man. To him, who had attained perfection, the spiritual world and its laws were open. He beholds the soul and sees all that takes place in it. He indicates to it the path to perfection. He is entirely caught up in contemplation of God and in exaltation. To him the great secrets of the world above are open.

His writings speak to us chiefly of deification. He develops the philosophy of communion with God, although he built no philosophical system. "Genuine philosophy is ascetical doing, the acquisition of the Spirit of Wisdom and Reason. A God-bearing contemplator or seer of mysteries is a true wise man or lover of wisdom (philosopher)." He speaks of the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. External labors -- fasting, vigil, prayer -- are only means to this and are not in themselves an end. This teaching of the acquisition of the Holy Spirit comes down through the centuries to our own great Seraphim. In the renowned Conversation with Motovilov St. Seraphim reveals to our whole contemporary world this ancient yet all-but-forgotten teaching.

As a precious heritage of the spiritual wisdom of St. Macarius, there remain to us fifty of his *Homilies* and seven *Ascetic Treatises*.

Several prayers written by Macarius the Great have entered into Church use. These are:

From the Prayers before Sleep, the first prayer, "O Eternal God," and the fourth, "What shall I offer Thee."

From the Morning Prayers, the first prayer, "O Lord, cleanse me," the second, "Having risen from sleep," the third, "To Thee, O Lord," the fourth, "O Lord, Who in Thy abundant goodness," and according to Greek manuscripts the ninth also, "O Holy Angel."

The relics of St. Macarius the Great repose in Italy, in the city of Amalfi on the Gulf of Salerno, not far from Naples.

ECUMENISM AND COMMUNISM

By AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN
LIVING BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

The beginning of the new and redoubled persecution of Christianity within the Soviet Union in this decade coincided with the entrance of the Moscow Patriarchate into the World Council of Churches in 1961. To the Soviet government these are but two aspects of its relentless campaign against religion: to destroy at home, to infiltrate abroad. But what prompts official Ecumenism to accept such a program with scarcely a ripple of protest? This article, written by a member of that martyric race of Orthodox Christians living behind the Iron Curtain, penetrates to the heart of this question and finds Ecumenism and Communism, despite their outward contradictions, to be brothers and allies in their battle against the Church of Christ. The article was given to Monsieur Elias Rouart, a French Orthodox Parisian, with the request that it be published in the West. The author, for understandable reasons, wishes to remain unknown.

WE ARE NOT going to discuss atheistic Communism here. It is so primitive and barbaric that it is not even worthwhile for one to refute it. Like a wild animal, it knows nothing except to overturn and to destroy, without ever attracting! Meanwhile, next to Communism there is Ecumenism which seeks to ensnare souls by preaching the unity of Christians, lying in wait like a Siren for its victims. However, it is exactly in the countries of militant atheism that "faith" in Ecumenism is becoming more apparent! This is something that should make us doubt its Christian character. In reality, these two brothers, with all their apparent contradictions, are nothing else deep down but children of the same "father of lies," creations of worldwide Freemasonry.

The subject concerns two brothers, the similar sound of whose names symbolizes their common descent. In fact, was it not in Geneva, under Masonic neutrality (which is so characteristic of Switzerland), that Lenin, with the support of the Lodges, formed the great conspiracy which prepared the Revolution of 1917 against Orthodox Russia, with militant atheism being the first point of its program?[1] Was it not in

1. The kinship of such 'neutrality' with Communism was further demonstrated in November of 1967 by official ceremonies in Geneva by cantonal and municipal authorities to mark the 50th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. A memorial plaque was placed on the house where Lenin lived, and Lenin's stay of several years in Geneva, together with his revolutionary activities there, were commemorated and a booklet issued: "Lenin in Geneva." See *Orthodox Russia*, 1967, no. 22 (*ed. note*).

Geneva also that there was formed in 1927 -- only ten years later -- the "World Council of Churches," which is nothing else but a lower, "profane" branch of Freemasonry, such as the Rotary and Scouting? The members of the latter organizations are not necessarily initiated, and for this reason at first glance their relationships with the Lodges are not apparent, but in their aims they follow the Lodges' directives according to the letter.

Just as everywhere else, here also Masonry strives to bring about a confusion of ideas which will help it to assimilate the great masses by applying a principle which is exactly opposite to "divide and conquer"-- that is: "combine and govern," and in this way paralyzing all spiritual powers through adulteration and imitation. Thus, Ecumenism strives to replace the true concept of the Church -- One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic -- by means of the subversive idea of a pan-heretical union. In fact, Ecumenism shows no interest in distinguishing between truth and heresy. On the contrary, it invites all the confessions to combine in a synthesis where the word "heresy" is absent for practical reasons and does not exist even as a possibility. Within Ecumenism the Church ceases to be a unique, living entity, and becomes a general idea, including in an equalizing manner the various types of "Christian Churches." Thus the Church of Christ loses her concrete meaning, her very essence, and is brought down to the level of a general abstraction. This precisely appears behind the ambiguous assertion of the [former] General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Visser t'Hooft: "Ecumenism is entitled a 'federation of churches'; it itself is not a church; but, by the will of God [*sic*], as I see, it may become one day the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church [*sic*]" (*Conseil Oecumenique des Eglises*, p. 90). We must also mention the assertion that escaped the mouth of Anderson while speaking to an Orthodox protopresbyter during one meeting in Athens in 1938. "We will not be pedantic any longer," he said. "The next step in Ecumenical activity will be the union of Christians with the faithful of other religions, on the basis of the principle of monotheism."[1]

The ever-memorable Metropolitan of Samos, Eirinaios, had very correctly observed the total absence of a Trinitarian concept in the

1. Orthodox Ecumenists, thirty years later, have now declared themselves ready for this step. The official statement of the 19th Clergy-Laity Congress of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, meeting in Athens in July, 1968, included the following assertion: "We believe that the ecumenical movement, even though it is of Christian origin, must become a movement of all religions reaching towards each other" (*ed. note*).

dogmatic basis preached by Ecumenism. It is constantly stressed that God is one, without any mention of the Holy Trinity. Thus when after the observation by Eirinaios there was added at the end (so that it could easily be removed) of the Ecumenical "Creed" the phrase: "of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," the whole construction gave the impression of the monistic concept held by the ancient heretical Montanists, who saw in the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity nothing but three manners of manifestation of the single God.

Furthermore, if there were in Ecumenism a true Triadology, this Triadology should have been the basis of Christology, since Christ is the hypostatic incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. However, Ecumenism systematically avoids professing Christ as the Incarnate God. Once, when this concrete formulation was proposed, it was not adopted at all -- something which is very characteristic of the secret anti-Christian views of the World Council. Furthermore, the Christology which Ecumenism puts forth in its profession of faith in "Christ -- God and Saviour" does not offer any guarantee of Orthodoxy, because under this exceedingly broad label all the heresies of Christianity can fit. Furthermore, will not the Antichrist himself come with the assertion that he is God? (II Thess. 2:4.)

But let us return to the secret relations of Ecumenism with its brother, Communism, which alone can explain the intensification of the position of Ecumenism in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. And first we must stress the exceedingly important point that the entrance of the Russian Church into the World Council of Churches in 1961, coincided with the intensification of the persecutions on the part of the atheists. One would expect that this rapprochement with the World Council would have at least brought about an abatement of the persecution against the Russian Church -- and it was without a doubt for her the only valid justification for such an adventurous undertaking. In spite of this, no such thing took place. On the contrary, the atheistic frenzy which was ravaging the Church has doubled its wrath since then!

In the face of this event, how can anyone explain the absolute silence of the World Council which, in spite of the fact that it preaches itself to be a champion of Faith and Order on a world-wide scale, nevertheless tolerates without any protest a militant atheism which acts publicly -- a disorder so flagrant, a violation so manifest of the most elementary constitutional rights? The justification which Nikita Struve

gives of such a defeatist position seems to us strangely naive: "If Geneva keeps silence," he writes, "it is because an official protest would immediately bring a sharp conflict with the representatives of the churches which are behind the Iron Curtain and which recently have been accepted into the Ecumenical Movement" (Nikita Struve, *Les Chretiens en U.R.S.S.*, Paris, 1963, p. 282). But if the World Council was sincerely resolved to defend the Christian Faith (and in this specific case, Orthodoxy) why indeed should it fear to cause a conflict (an artificial one, furthermore) in this matter with the representatives of the churches beyond the Iron Curtain -- something which would have been the only means of putting things in order? Furthermore, some two years ago did not the Exarch of the Russian Patriarchate in Western Europe, remaining always faithful to his canonical obedience, protest emphatically in the name of his obedience against the atheistic persecutions, with the danger of bringing about unavoidable conflicts? If, therefore, the World Council melts away in the face of militant atheism, it is because, by reason of its Masonic allegiance, it feels inwardly much more in common with the agents of worldwide Communism than with the representatives of the Orthodox Church. These latter are nothing but pawns, directed willy-nilly in a game of mutual compromises by which political elements will be benefited -- elements which, under the pretence that they look with favor upon the Church, finally paralyze her. Thus once more is it confirmed that compromises in religion never lead to victory.

Here we should mention an historical example. As Gaston Boissier has very well demonstrated, the inimical attitude of the Roman rulers toward the first Christians was caused primarily by the intransigence of the latter and by their categorical refusal to allow Christ to be included in that broad pantheon in which Rome had gathered all the gods of idolatry. "It was this stubborn insistence of theirs on separating themselves thus from the rest of the world in order to keep their faith pure from every alien admixture which alone can explain the violence of the persecutions, the victims of which were the Christians for three centuries" (Gaston Boissier, *La religion romaine d'Auguste a Antonius*), Paris, 1884, pp. 402-3). The ancient Church preferred, therefore, to endure the harshest persecutions (over which she triumphed, furthermore) rather than to participate in an idolatrous syncretism which would have assailed its very Christian essence. Unfortunately, in our days the example of the ancient Church has not been followed. The Ecumenism of Geneva, a tributary of a religious syncretism with a Masonic basis -- which for

the present is called "Christian" by way of window-dressing -- by using the strong arm which its partner, Communism, has lent it, has managed to attract practically the whole of the Orthodox Church into its nets -- at least in the person of its official representatives, who of course in this case are far from expressing the voice of the Orthodox people!

And the false position in which the Orthodox find themselves within this Masonic "pantheon" that is the World Council of Geneva, wherein Orthodoxy sees that she is assigned an ecumenically acceptable role at the extreme right of the spectrum of the Protestant "confessions," has already begun to prevail in the awareness of everyone. It is truly tragic that the theologians and "representatives" of Orthodoxy, with very few exceptions, so easily accepted this position, and thus without understanding it found themselves on the same level as the offshoots of competing Western heresies. The blame must be put on those Orthodox who, having accepted the principle of all the "confessions" and applying it to the Orthodox Church, once more betrayed their mission, their very essence, which is something totally different from all these heretical systems and which is the Church herself in all her fullness and unity. The "separate Orthodox statements" which have been added to virtually all the decisions of the great Ecumenical conferences show clearly, in their futility, the feeling the Orthodox representatives have always had -- that they are found in an erroneous position -- a feeling that explains the continuous anguish of the Orthodox in the Ecumenical Movement.

Furthermore, so that we may speak especially of the great Church of Russia which is entering into even more trials -- there certainly could be no thought of her entering the World Council of Geneva without the consent, or rather the pressure, of the Soviet state. Yet one can be sure that this would not have brought the Church to such a compromise if some genuine advantage would not result. This is precisely what Nikita Struve has emphasized: "By looking with favor upon the external relations of the Russian Church, the Soviet Government managed to neutralize the various Western protests which could have lifted their voice for the Christians of Russia" (Nikita Struve, *Ibid.*, p. 282).

The forced entrance of the Russian Church into the World Council is nothing else, therefore, but another form -- much more dangerous because it is cunning -- of persecution against the Orthodox Church. Thus Masonry and Communism, notwithstanding all their external disputes, put forth their hands in order to destroy -- each from his own side -- the Church of Christ, just as in the past the Pharisees and Sadducees fought together against Christ Himself. Also significant is the fact that in 1962 --

only a few months after the entrance of the Russian Church into the World Council -- the Archbishop of the Anglican Church, while officially visiting Moscow during the greatest intensity of the persecutions, found nothing better to do than to joke with Mikoyan (*Ibid.*). And this 'Ecumenical-Communist flirtation' did not begin just lately. Twenty years ago, the Dean of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson, published a laudatory trilogy concerning the "Socialism," the "power," and the "success" of the Soviets. In conclusion he drew a parallel between Lenin and Christ, since, as it seems, both had the well-being of mankind as their ideal! He ends by proclaiming the Soviet Union to be "an ally with everything that is the best which exists in the religions of the world"!!!

Thus the Orthodox Church behind the Iron Curtain is found subjected by two allied yokes: the yoke of Ecumenism which comes to double the yoke of Communism. This Masonic-atheistic alliance gives birth to disheartening aberrations which make every Orthodox heart bleed. For instance, an address given at the ordination of an Orthodox (a convert from Roman Catholicism) in Paris in a heterodox Church building, had to be mutilated in its very essence and pruned of every criticism of heterodoxy in order to be published in Moscow (compare the two periodicals: *Messager de l'Exerchat du Patriarche Russe en Europe Occidental*, Paris, 1961, no. 35, p. 7; and *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1961, no. 2, p. 29). This Orthodox Church desires to celebrate a local anniversary but is forbidden to invite other sister Orthodox Churches, whereas it is obliged to celebrate in the presence of representatives of the World Council. The Orthodox Russian clergy, which is forbidden to preach, is obliged to give its place to foreign ecumenists who preach freely in Orthodox temples to the great scandal of the Orthodox people (see *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1964, No. 5, pages 36-39). The professor-ecumenists of the West travel freely in these lands in order to give lectures in the theological academies and there to expound ecumenical subjects.

Ecumenism, a Masonic invention, seeks to reduce all religions to an equal level, to knead them in the same kneading bowl, in order slowly to prepare the paste of religious indifference -- a foreshadowing symptom of the Antichrist. The so-called "Christian" Ecumenism of Geneva is in reality a disguise for a clearly anti-Christian ideology which compromises with militant atheism. This precisely explains the Ecumenistic reign of terror which rules mainly behind the Iron Curtain, as well also

as the silence of the World Council in the face of militant atheism. So that all scepticism in this matter may be done away, let us ask ourselves: what other power beside that of Communism allied with Ecumenism could oblige the Metropolitan of Leningrad, Nikodim, during the recent assembly of the World Peace Conference in Prague, to take part in an Ecumenical "worship service" (*culte Oecumeniste*) together with Protestant pastors (and in particular to publish a photograph of this service on expensive paper in the eighth volume of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, to the greater scandal of the Orthodox people), in violation of the tenth and forty-fifth Apostolic Canons -- which forbid Orthodox, under penalty of excommunication, from any joint prayer (how much more so joint worship) with heretics! Formerly there was no question of more than Ecumenistic common prayer, at which the Orthodox were simply present. Lately there has been devised the term "Ecumenic worship," in which Orthodox clergymen must take part! The next step will undoubtedly be "eucharistic" concelebration, which will also mark the final fall of the allegedly "Orthodox" representatives.

Orthodox Christians! In our days, which are defiled by Ecumenistic madness, we comprise *the remnant that is according to the election of grace*, this remnant of Israel *that has not bended the knee to Baal* (Romans 11:4,5). This privilege imposes the imperative duty on us to struggle to preserve Orthodoxy from the Ecumenistic defilement which assails it. To us is turned the gaze of the Orthodox living behind the Iron Curtain, who are reduced to lamentable defeatism as a result of the pressure exercised upon them by atheistic Communism and strengthened by its counterpart, Masonic Ecumenism, which perpetrates an ecclesiological heresy of the most dangerous type! We, by the very fact of our faith in Orthodoxy, are called by Divine Providence to preach the true, Orthodox ecumenism which raises the standard of truth above all else, which without any distinction or discrimination of race, nation, or language receives and embraces all men of good will who honorably and fervently seek original Christianity (which is truly ecumenical), which is nothing else but the pure Orthodox Faith handed down as an inheritance by our Lord Jesus Christ to His Apostles, and which is proclaimed by the Holy Orthodox Church -- which even the gates of hell have not yet been able, nor shall ever be able, to cast down.

THE MEETING

OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

FEBRUARY 2

By S. V. BULGAKOV[1]

And when the days of Her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord; (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

St. Luke 2: 22-24

ON THIS FEAST is commemorated the bringing of Jesus Christ by the Most Holy Virgin Mary, upon the fulfillment of the forty days of purification, into the Temple (St. Luke 2: 22-39), for the redemption established by the Law of Moses (Lev. 12: 2-8; Ex. 13: 2, 13; Numbers 3: 13 and 8: 16-18). The Most Holy Virgin, although She had no need of purification, still appeared in the Temple in order to fulfill all according to the Law.

In the Temple the Child was met by the righteous Simeon. In sacred ecstasy the holy elder offered up praise and thanksgiving to God. Who had fulfilled the hope of his heart, and, penetrated by a feeling of unearthly blessedness, he took the Child in his embrace, and at the setting of his days pronounced the marvelous words which the Holy Church daily repeats in her evening song at setting of day: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy words: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.*

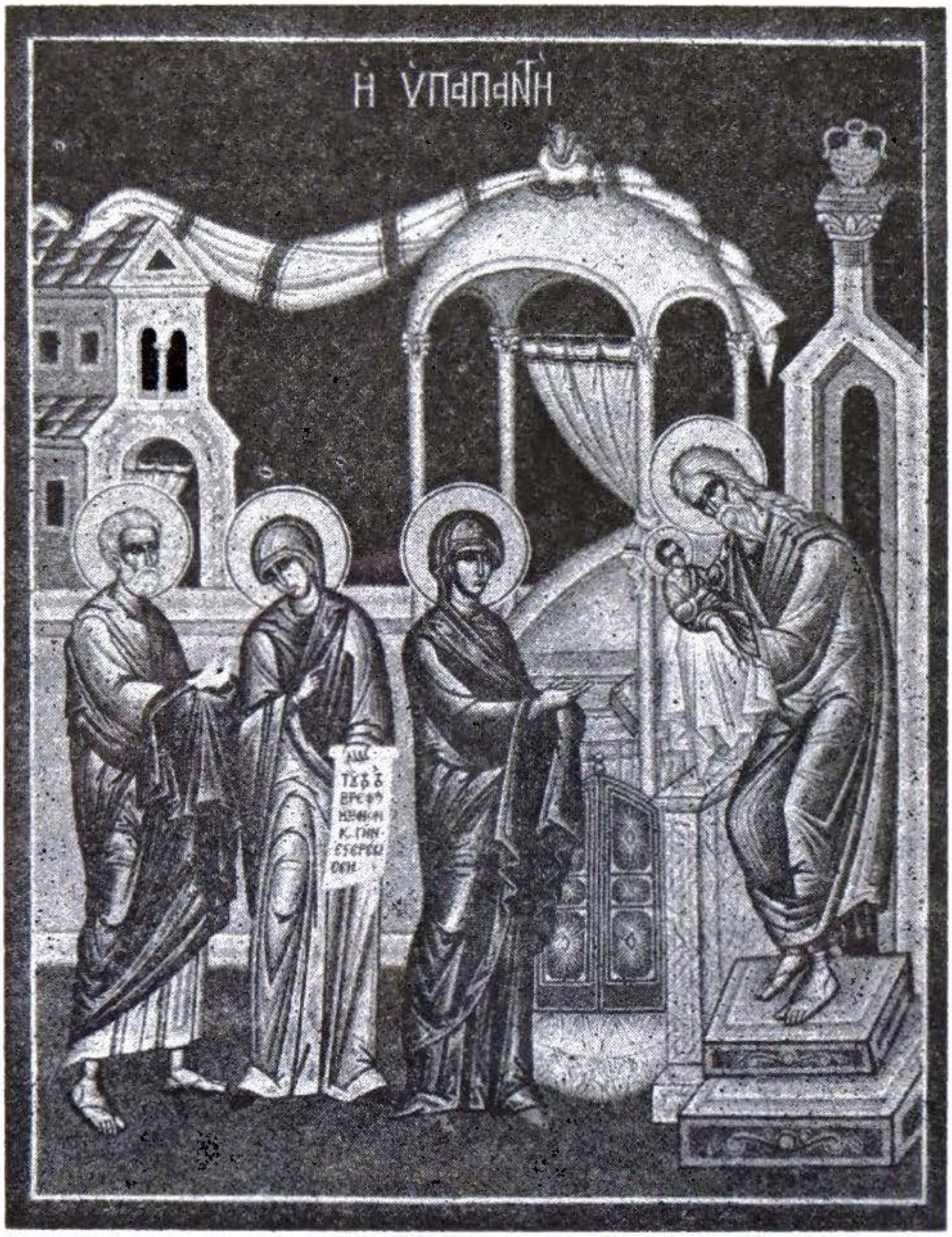
1. From the *Manual for Orthodox Priests* (*Nastolnaya Kniga*), Kharkov, 1900.

Hearing these words, Joseph and Mary were amazed by them, for these words clearly testified that the Divine mystery had already been revealed to the righteous Simeon. Continuing then his God-inspired prophecy, the righteous elder turned to Mary and, indicating the Child to Her, said: *Behold, this (Child) is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through Thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* By these prophetic words the righteous Simeon predicted the universal bitter battle of faith and unbelief. As for the words applying to the Most Holy Virgin, they were definitively fulfilled when She stood by the Cross of Christ (St. John 19: 25).

While the holy elder was pronouncing his prophetic words concerning the God-Child, the righteous Anna was in the Temple. She also joined her inspired voice to the voice of Simeon, glorifying God and, as a prophetess, undoubtedly informing about the Child in a prophetic sense. Having performed in the Temple all that was required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary returned with the God-Child to Nazareth.

From the occurrence of the meeting of the God-Child by the righteous Simeon the very feast received its name in the Orthodox Church. The Meeting is celebrated on February 2 because this day is the fortieth after December 25. The origin of the feast goes back to great antiquity. There is no doubt that this feast was known in the Church of Jerusalem in the 4th century; from Jerusalem it passed to other Churches in the 5th and 6th centuries. The especially triumphant celebration of the feast began in the Churches of East and West at different times and for various reasons. Among Western writers the establishment of the triumphant celebration of the feast (with a special *litia*) is ascribed by some to Pope Gelasius (496 A.D.), and by others to St. Gregory the Great (600), and they presume that by this means the Popes named had in view to destroy the pagan feast of Lupercalia, which fell in February and at that period was still in force among the Romans.

In the Eastern Church the beginning of the triumphant celebration of the Meeting of the Lord is referred to the time of Justinian, specifically to the years 541-2. At the end of 541 in Constantinople and its environs a terrible plague occurred, which lasted for three months and toward the end struck dead between five and ten thousand people every day. To this disaster a new one was soon joined: an earthquake in Antioch which destroyed many buildings and killed many people. At the time of these disasters, on the feast of the Meeting, there was celebrated for the whole people a solemn service of prayer (or *litia*) for deliverance from evils, and the plague ceased.



Icon by Basil Lepouras

TROPARION, TONE 1

REJOICE, VIRGIN MOTHER OF GOD, full of grace,* for from Thee hath shone forth the Sun of justice, Christ our God, *enlightening those in darkness.* And thou too rejoice, O righteous elder,* taking in thy embrace the Redeemer of our souls,* Who granteth to us resurrection.

The day following this feast is devoted to a special commemoration of the Prophetess Anna and the Righteous Simeon. St. Simeon is a connecting link between the Old Testament and the New. He had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen Christ the Lord. According to tradition he was one of the seventy commentators who, at the request of the Egyptian King Ptolemy Philadelphus, were sent to Egypt in the 3rd century B.C. by the High Priest Eleazar to translate the Hebrew Holy Books into Greek (the *Septuagint*, the version of the Old Testament used by the Orthodox Church). Simeon, while translating the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the birth of Emmanuel from a virgin (Is. 7: 14: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*), seemed to doubt the words of the prophecy and wished to correct them, but he was informed by the Spirit of God that he would not die until he saw the fulfillment of this prophecy. In expectation of the Coming of the Saviour, the holy elder, according to this tradition, lived to the age of 360.

Amidst the miseries of his times, with the general decline of faith and morals, the holy elder lived in expectation of the Coming of the Saviour; with the eyes of faith he saw the approaching salvation of men. When the God-Child was brought into the Temple for the performance of the lawful rite upon Him, Simeon received a revelation from the Holy Spirit that his hope had been fulfilled, that his eyes would behold the Saviour in the Child Who was then in the Temple. Entering the Temple, St. Simeon was indeed found worthy not only to behold with his eyes the Saviour, but even to raise Him in his frail arms. Weighed down with age, his hair white, the holy elder in this instance was as it were a representative of the entire Old Testament, and at the same time, as the Holy Church sings, a *secret preacher of the new grace.*

The Gospel does not say what calling the righteous Simeon followed, but in the Church's hymns he is called *priest, hierarch, celebrator of the sacraments, one who offered lawful sacrifices*, and *one who purified the people of Israel by bloody sacrifices.* In all probability he was one of the priests of the Temple of Jerusalem, and his actions at the Meeting of the Lord (St. Luke 2: 23, 27) are in accord with such a supposition.

By its celebration of the Meeting of the Lord the Holy Church, confessing and affirming that *Christ has appeared to the world, not in opinion, not in vision, but in truth*, accused these false teachers of antiquity who rejected in Jesus Christ His human nature, considering this unworthy of God and untrue. Together with this example of the Saviour and His Most Holy Mother, Who fulfilled all that was demanded by the law, there is

instilled in us the necessity of fulfilling the rules and rites of the Holy Church, and we are reminded of our incorporation in the Church of Christ, of our dedication to God, to Whom we should also bring our souls and bodies as a living sacrifice, pure and grace-giving. Besides this, the Holy Church, hymning in this feast Sts. Simeon and Anna, instructs us that we should find, after the example of the Righteous Simeon, grace-giving consolation and salvation in Christ, entrusting into His all-good Providence our life and death; and, after the example of the Prophetess Anna, we should, as frequently as possible, visit the temple of God and please the Lord by prayer and fasting. Finally, the feast of the Meeting of the Lord instructs us, in the misfortunes which overtake us, to turn to the Lord God, the constant and speedy Helper and Protector of all who call upon Him with faith and with true repentance.

OPEN TO ME THE DOOR OF REPENTANCE, O GIVER OF LIFE!

(*Continued from p. 1*)

But now a ray of Divine Light penetrates into our soul. How much filth shall we see then in ourselves! How much injustice, how much falsehood! How hideous will many actions turn out to be which we fancied excellent. It will become clear to us that we are going by wrong paths. It becomes clear to us which path is right.

If we shall acknowledge then our spiritual nothingness, our sinfulness, and with our whole soul shall desire our correction -- we shall be near to salvation. From the depths of our soul let us call to the Lord: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy mercy!" "Forgive me and save me!" "Grant me to behold my sins and not to judge my brother!"

At the beginning of the Great Fast let us hasten to forgive each other all hurts and offences. Let us ever hear the words of the Gospel of Forgiveness Sunday: *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (St. Matt. 6: 14-15).

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